

THE SUNDAY JOURNAL.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 1896.

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band goods, and it will impose the duty of strict neutrality between the belligerents and of increased vigilance on the part of the United States to prevent the fitting out of hostile expeditions. Recognition of the belligerency of the Confederate States indirectly endorses England, because of the neglect of due vigilance, \$15,000,000, which, as a result of the Geneva arbitration, she had to pay the United States for allowing Confederate cruisers to be armed and equipped in British ports.

AS TO BELLIGERENTS.

In the discussion of the Cuban question some stress has been laid on the fact that at the very beginning of our civil war Spain recognized the Confederates as belligerents, and it has been claimed that this would have justified much earlier recognition of the Cuban insurgents. The cases are not parallel. According to international law, sovereign states at war are always belligerents. In the event of war between the United States and England, between England and France, or between any two sovereign states, both would be recognized as belligerents from the start. Doubt only arises when one of the parties to the struggle is not in the enjoyment of political sovereignty. Generally the quality of belligerents is accorded to members of a confederation which engage in a struggle with each other. In our civil war there was some ground for foreign governments regarding the Southern States as sovereign members of a confederacy. The United States could not admit this, but it was tenable ground for foreign governments to take, and it was strengthened by the fact that each of the seceded States had a complete State government in full operation, and the first thing they did was to adopt a constitution and create a general government. If a civil war were to break out in Germany and some of the quasi-sovereign states were to unite against the imperial government and place an army in the field, the United States would probably recognize them as belligerents as soon as hostilities began. Plainly, therefore, there was more reason in international law, from the standpoint of foreign governments, for recognizing the Confederates as belligerents than there has been in the case of the Cuban insurgents, who have had none of the attributes of a sovereign state, and until recently have not had a working government, if they have now. This is not said by way of criticism or deprecating the action of Congress in now recognizing the Cubans as belligerents, but simply to show that the cases of the Confederates and the Cubans were not exactly parallel.

The fact is, there is no international law or established rule governing the recognition of belligerents. It is a mixed question of fact, politics and sympathy. No one case can serve exactly as a precedent in another, nor the action of one government be regarded as controlling on that of others. As between the United States and Cuba, the close proximity of the island to this country furnishes strong reasons why we should desire its independence and seek to put an end to the barbarities now being practiced there. It is to be hoped the recognition of the insurgents as belligerents may tend to this end.

THE PROPOSED SCHOOL REFORM.

The Commercial Club, if it carries out the plan of its officers in regard to the public school system, will render the people of Indianapolis a great service. The work was initiated at the meeting of the club addressed by President Draper, Friday evening. It is proposed by the officers to have the subject referred to a committee which will give the matter intelligent consideration and report its conclusions.

There can be no question that the law creating the School Board, with its present functions, should be radically changed. It doubtless was adequate to the demands of twenty-five years ago, and would be adequate now if all the members of the School Board were men of the public spirit and intelligence of those who composed the early boards. Now, with the mixed functions of the school commissioner and the opportunities such positions offer for personal advantage and influence, men who have no interest in public schools sometimes seek commissionships for personal ends.

The address of President Draper very clearly sets forth the changes which should be made. The first and most important is that the functions of the School Board should be arbitrarily legislative. The men who vote money should not spend it, or, as a rule, select those who shall superintend its expenditure. The board should have nothing to do with the selection of teachers. It should have no voice in the selection of janitors and like employees. If a schoolhouse is to be built, the board should select the location, designate the character of the building and approve the plans, but the details of the purchase of land and of contracts for construction should devolve upon a salaried officer, who should be made by law independent of the School Board and responsible to the city in large bonds. The board should have power to determine questions of repairs and vote the money, but no member of it should be permitted to select the men who will do the work. Under a proper law the treasurer of the board could not be a member of it, and, consequently, he could not be hiring money at 25 per cent. above the market rate unless the whole board should stop him from so doing, as they did two weeks ago. When a school board shall be restricted to legislative functions and forbidden to interfere with the executive branches of the school service, men who now spend money and devote weeks in attempts to get an election will have no interest in the office. To confine the School Board to legislative functions is the first thing to be done in improving the business side of the public school system. Unless the reform begins with divorcing the board absolutely from all executive functions and the dispensing of patronage, it will be as well to not begin here at the start of the present year.

No doubt the management of the schools should be nonpartisan, but the favoritism, the jobbery and the nepotism which have appeared in the recent management of the Indianapolis board are a greater evil than party control. No party would have carried the Ricketts deal into effect in the face of the protest of the mass of intelligent taxpayers. There is no partyism which would dare tolerate the favoritism which has been notorious

in the management of the financial affairs of the present board. If the people in the school districts who have an interest in the public schools will meet and select for candidates for school commissioners men of public spirit and intelligence, instead of allowing men who have personal ends to serve to make themselves candidates, there would be neither politics nor questionable irregularities in the School Board.

There is a very evident purpose in certain quarters to commit the city to a large expenditure for school buildings which shall be "dreams of art." If this is any part of the purpose of the present movement, it will be well to modify it. What the city needs is plain and convenient structures, containing all the sanitary requirements necessary to insure the health and comfort of the children of the city. Even the wealthiest of cities are not pouring money into "dreams of art." Fortunately, the Constitution of the State and the present indebtedness of the city render the embarking in the construction of a costly system of school buildings impossible.

The Journal will most cordially sustain the Commercial Club in its efforts to improve the business side of the school system if it shall begin by securing a school law for Indianapolis which shall make the School Board a purely legislative body and place the executive duties of management of the business part of the schools in the hands of competent agents, who, during a term of years, cannot be removed except after a trial and conviction by an independent tribunal.

RUPTIOUS STUDENTS.

Wabash College students appear before the public with unpleasant frequency as participants in brawls and disgraceful outbreaks of various sorts. Just now the freshmen class is reported as being on a strike; that is, it has threatened to leave school in a body if two of its members recently suspended for a misdemeanor are not reinstated. It has presented its "ultimatum" to the faculty and is now leaning back in its veiled dignity, waiting for a surrender. If any value is placed on discipline in the institution the faculty will pay no attention to the insolent demand, but will go about its business and leave